THE PRESS BILL.

Mr. Rajaram Row.—At the last meeting of the Council, I obtained leave to introduce this Bill. This has also been published but it is not 15 days since its publication. I beg, therefore, to move that Rule 33 be suspended, so that I may formally introduce the Bill.

Seconded by Mr. Thanu Pillai.

The Council having suspended the Rule, Mr. Rajaram Row introduced the Bill and in doing so said:—

I do not propose to enter into an explanation of the main provisions, as it is not my intention to move for the discussion of the principle at this meeting. But I wish to make one observation, to remove a misapprehension that seems to have arisen in some quarters. The term "Press Bill" appears to have created some alarm that it is in contemplation to place a gag on the press of this country. Criticisms to this effect have come not only from the country but from outside also. I have only to say that all this apprehension is unfounded. Any one who reads carefully my observations in asking for permission to introduce this Bill would be easily convinced that the Bill contemplates nothing whatever in the nature of a gag. The Bill itself is now before the public, and they can judge for themselves whether any restrictions are contemplated to be placed upon the Press. They will see, on the other hand, that the Press in Travancore will enjoy the full measure of liberty which is accorded in all free countries. All that is intended is to fix responsibility for literary and other publications and to lay down a procedure to be adopted in establishing printing presses and publishing news-papers. The sections relating to the circulation of publications through the Unjel are inserted in conformity with the provisions of the Post Office Regulation recently passed to facilitate the working of British Post offices in Travancore. I reserve my further remarks to a later stage, and beg to introduce the Bill and move that the discussion of the principle be deferred to the next meeting.

Seconded by Mr. Thanu Pillai.

The motion was put and agreed to.

The Council adjourned at 3-50 P. M.

K. KRISHNASWAMY RAO,
President.

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